

32-125-0

8 May 1952

WIRTSCHAFTSPOLITISCHE GESELLSCHAFT 1947  
(Society for Questions of Economic Policy 1947)  
Frankfurt-Main, Germany

1. Subject organization was founded in December 1947 in Frankfurt-Main by the initiative of (Dr.) Rudolf Tüller (formerly Minister of Economic Affairs for the State of Hesse, appointed by the U. S. authorities; now practicing as a lawyer with offices in Frankfurt, Reuterweg 32) and of (Prof. Dr.) Ludwig Erhard, now Federal Minister of Economic Affairs in Bonn. Its constitution and by-laws define its purpose as "to gather and to disseminate knowledge on matters of economic policy and to present such knowledge to economic circles and to the general public; the society does not operate any business for profit purposes."

2. The only press reaction on the establishment of the society which is on file here was printed in the Telegraf, Berlin, on 31 December 1947, a two-column article, headed "KLOSSE INTERESSEN GRUPPUNG?" ("Merely a Special-Interest Group?") and is extremely hostile toward subject. It describes the group as "ein neuer Herrenklub" (Comment: The old Herrenklub was a feudal club in Berlin prior to 1933 to which Papen and other upper-class Nazi collaborationists belonged) and denounces it as "big capitalist restoration." Subject's program is defined as a "mixture of economic common-places and temptingly formulated ideas with arch-reactionary employers' demands." The article attacks in particular the group's alleged demand for "undivided responsibility of management" and its stand against state planning.

3. Official documents of subject group make it appear to be an organization consisting mostly (but apparently not exclusively) of employers and managers whose general policy may be defined as pro-Western and liberal (in the economic sense), opposed to state planning and socialization and unequivocally anti-Communist. A resolution adopted by the enlarged executive committee at a conference held in Hattenheim on 16 July 1948 characterizes this general line. Its main passages read:

"If the imminent danger (of World War III) can be overcome, everything depends upon whether or not the peoples of the Western world—to which we belong, too—develop a new, common initiative to secure the peace. To achieve this end, proclaiming freedom in terms of governmental policy is not enough. It is equally necessary to bridge the social conflicts and to create thus the preliminary conditions under which freedom can exist as the common good. It is necessary to increase the social product substantially and to let the non-propertied strata participate in the increased product of national production to such an extent that they will be de-proletarianized."

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This goal can be reached only if economic policy is being shifted everywhere from the protectionism of nationally limited economy in the direction of unrestricted world-wide division of economic functions. This would also activate the forces beyond the "Iron Curtain" which are looking for a compromise."

4. The number of subject's members has not yet been ascertained. At a recent meeting, 100 persons were present. Annual membership fees amount to 24 DM for individuals (reduced to 6 DM for members of the Youth Group) and 240 DM for business firms (per annum). Subscription price for the society's newsletter ("BERATUNGSBRIEFE") is 600 DM per annum.

5. The executive committee is at present composed as follows:

Chairman: Dr. Rudolf Müller (See para 1 above.)

Vice-Chairman: Otto Klepper, prior to 1933 Prussian Minister of Finances

Members: Dr. Kurt Willems, Oberhausen  
Dr. Kurt Gentelin, Hanover  
Dr. Fritz Ackermann, Frankfurt  
Karl Graf, Ringelheim/Harz  
Albrecht Vickers, Düsseldorf  
Dr. Ernst Reissmann, Hamburg  
Prof. Dr. Ludwig Erhard (See para 1 above.)  
Heinrich Albersmann, Baden-Baden  
Gustav Goehne, Hanover  
Dr. Quanter-Wanle, Duisburg  
Karl Jaeger, Bremen/Post Wuldkappel.

6. The following members of the office staff have been identified thus far:

Erich Dethleffsen - Membership affairs, meetings, finances  
Hermann Larsen - Deputy to Dethleffsen  
Ulrich von Pufendorf ) In charge of the research department and  
Dr. Gernot Eather ) liaison with outside consultants  
Klaus Franz - Publications and public relations.

7. Subject publishes both periodicals and casual publications. The former are:

a. MITTEILUNGEN DER WIRTSCHAFTSPOLITISCHEN GESELLSCHAFT  
("Notes from the Society for Questions of Economic Policy")  
Monthly. Printed. For members only. The latest issue available, dated "Easter 1950," has 56 pages, approximately 6 x 8 inches. It contains a number of articles on current political

and economic affairs, among which some reports and one editorial on German public opinion deserve special interest; in the second part, it reprints newspaper accounts of recent meetings of the society.

b. DEBATINGSERVICE (Advisory Letters). Weekly, mimeographed, 11-1/4 x 8-1/4 inches. Of two recent issues, one has 8, the other 25 pages. Editor is Dr. Herbert Gross (author of the book "The Road to Tomorrow" - a critical appraisal of Burnham's "Managerial Revolution" and other recent American publications), a journalist who for some time stayed in the U. S. These letters are available to non-members, too, but at a high fee. (See para 4 above.) The letters deal mainly with current economic questions, both domestic and foreign, and appear to provide business men with concise factual information of direct usefulness.

6. Topics of the casual publications issued by subject are, for instance:

Labor and Management in U.S.A. (8 pages)  
The Status of Anti-Trust Law-Enforcement in U.S.A. (12 pages)  
Labor, Management and Government in Great Britain (8 pages)  
Labor's Share in Industry in U.S.A. (12 pages).

9. Subject arranges also lectures which cover a wide range of topics. On 18 August 1949, for instance, Mrs. Ruth Fischer spoke about "Germany and Russia." Other recent lectures dealt with "Agriculture and Industry," "Public Opinion Research," "The Reasons for Chiang-Kai-Shek's defeat in the Chinese civil war," and so forth. On these lectures, as well as on speeches made by officials of the group before other organizations, extensive mimeographed press releases are issued.

10. Subject reportedly owns—or controls at least in part—certain newspapers, not overtly connected with the group. Reports thus far mention in particular the Hamburg weekly NEUE ZEIT ("Time"). The latest issue available, dated 20 April 1950, consists of 12 pages, large newspaper size, 5 columns. The first front-page editorial opposes a recent statement by the German Federation of Labor in which an active fight against the enemies of democracy had been announced. In this connection, attacks against Herr Schlange-Schöningh are also refuted. Another front-page article protests allied restrictions imposed upon German shipbuilding. A significant passage in that article reads:

"Why are requests (for shipbuilding) turned down? Undoubtedly in order to suppress German competition. Now, this reason is not entirely unjustifiable. We started a war very frivolously and we lost it...But there is another factor,